

A B S T R A C T

The present invention relates to the automated carrying out of transactions or conclusions of contracts between contracting parties (A, B) in a communications network, such as for example the internet I. In particular there are described the necessary digital documents (D) for such an automated procedure, data processing devices (C) for assuming witness functions, data processing devices (P) for assuming guarantee functions, and computer software to be installed on corresponding computers for the carrying out of such transactions and conclusions of contracts. A significant element of the automated carrying out of transactions or conclusions of contracts in accordance with the invention is a digital document (D) having a document format with standardized fields for the indication of identities of the contracting parties (A, B) and for the indication of contractual modalities, whereby the fields consist of a standardized field descriptor and at least one value allowed for this field descriptor, so that on the basis of digital signatures (S) an automated carrying out of transactions or conclusion of contracts is possible. By means of such a digital document having a standardized document format, customer and supplier can agree contracts in the internet in principle on an equal basis.

(Fig. 1)